



THE 2024-2027

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Chapter 1. General Context	5
1.2. StratCom Operational Environment	5
Chapter 2. Strategy.....	7
2.1. The Vision of the Government of Georgia.....	7
2.2 The Goals and Objectives of the Communications Strategy.....	8
Chapter 3. The Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of the Strategy	13



Introduction

Efficient and purposeful communication is of particular importance during the implementation process of government reforms and programs. Clear explanation of government decisions and plans for the citizens of Georgia is the right of our society, on the one hand, and the duty of the authorities, on the other. Accordingly, consistent communication must be defined as one of the crucial components in implementing government policies. In addition, raising public awareness and proactively informing society is essential for bolstering trust in and support for the Government and its institutions. All these naturally preconditions the strengthening of the image of the Government of Georgia domestically and abroad.

The 2024-2027 Communications Strategy of the Government of Georgia is a document developed by the Government of Georgia for the first time. This document is designed to put in place a unified vision of a proactive, consistent, and coordinated communications system between the Government and society, helping raise awareness among the country's population, on the one hand, and is tailored to the long-term communications goals of the Government of Georgia, on the other. The Communications Strategy is based on the *Vision 2030—the Development Strategy of Georgia*, a national policy document approved by the Government in 2023, and complies with the long-term vision, strategic priorities, goals, and objectives of the country's development.

Notably, the document's development process involved participation from representatives of the strategic communications units of Georgia's governmental institutions and international/local experts. For the purposes of the strategy, under *Strategic Communications for a Better Future*, a program financed by the US Department of State, a strategic communications systemic study was conducted among Georgia's governmental institutions. As a result, both challenges in this direction and prospects of developing strategic communications were identified.

This strategic document consists of three chapters. The first chapter overviews the general context and information environment. The second chapter sets forth the communications vision, strategic goals and objectives that must be implemented to ensure the effective communication of the Government's priorities and reforms to the public. The document's final, third chapter is given to the communications strategy's implementation, monitoring, and evaluation components.

The strategy's inseparable part is the action plan to be renewed once a year, with work carried out and existing challenges in mind.

The Georgian Government's communication with the public will be effective if interagency communication is streamlined. Coordinated work is essential in the process of implementation of ongoing projects and reforms because it is only through unified, consistent, and preplanned communication activities that set goals can be achieved. In addition, effective internal government communications play a special role in crisis management when a timely response from more than one governmental structure on one particular issue or another is needed. To formulate unified messages and carry out coordinated action, all governmental institutions' strategic communications structural units must have coordinated objectives and goals. Communication based on these principles meets challenges in the information environment and elsewhere. The Strategic Communications Department of the Government Administration is the coordinating unit in charge of coordinating strategic communications on a high level, including ensuring regular meetings and periodical reporting.

Developing the Communications Strategy Paper engaged local and international experts, strategic communications representatives from the Ministries, the National Security Council, and the Information Center on NATO and the EU. In a rapidly changing information environment, the flexibility of the strategic communications system is vital. Consequently, the Communications Strategy of the Government of Georgia will be updated or reflect inevitable changes, if needed. As for the implementation budget, the volume of financial resources necessary for the implementation of activities pertaining to strategic communications will be defined based on the following sources from the annual budgets of the relevant governmental institutions: the state budget, local and international donor organizations, and other sources (the Decree #470 of the Government of Georgia).



Chapter 1. General Context

1.1. The Strategic Communications Department of the Government Administration

The Department of Strategic Communications, or *StratCom* is a structural unit incorporated into the Administration of the Government of Georgia and responsible for informing the public about the work of the Georgian Government and the Prime Minister of Georgia, raising awareness, and ensuring public engagement. To this end, it maintains close cooperation with central and local government institutions, civil society, the private sector, international and donor organizations, the academic community, and the media, and continuously informs stakeholders and the population about the Government's work, achievements, and planned reforms.

One of the priority directions of the Department of Strategic Communications of the Government Administration of Georgia is fighting against disinformation. Particular importance in the fight against disinformation is attached to the presence of an up-and-running media monitoring system. Media monitoring units have been created at the government administration and in individual ministries to monitor both traditional and social media platforms. Relevant response to identified facts of disinformation is provided through the official communication channels of the Georgian Government.

1.2. StratCom Operational Environment

1.2.1 External Factors. The StratCom operates in a challenging and complex environment, including political, economic, social, and information contexts on national, regional, and international levels. The outcomes and effectiveness of StratCom's work are primarily affected by public attitudes toward national policy and reforms, state institutions, and the information environment in which it operates.

Given the development of digital technologies and the country's geopolitical position, Georgia's information environment is complex, while the rapid changes in the modern world make communications especially important. The rapid spread of information, communication channels, disinformation, and fake news are equally important to all countries, including Georgia.

In Georgia, the main goal of disinformation is to disrupt social integrity and discredit Georgia's state institutions and European/Euro-Atlantic integration.

Fighting against disinformation and fake news is a constant, continuous process. The experience of the other countries shows that two factors underpin the fight against disinformation and the enhancement of societal resilience: on one hand, it is necessary to expose disinformation and spread fact-based objective information while actively working on media literacy, on the other—critical thinking, studying and analyzing the origin and goal of information is one necessary skill to differentiate fake news from truthful information.

1.2.2. Internal factors. In recent years, strategic communication has gained significant importance in planning and carrying out governmental communications, with its management quality and effectiveness rising, including through enhancing the professional expertise and technical skills of public servants employed within StratComs. Initially, strategic communications departments were established in several key directions (the Defense Ministry, the Foreign Ministry) and the Administration of the Government, followed by other governmental institutions at the next stage (the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and others). In addition, the StratCom of the Government Administration has been put in charge of coordination and tasked with high-level strategic communications coordination, including through regular meetings and periodical reporting.



Chapter 2. Strategy

2.1. The Vision of the Government of Georgia

2.1.1. The Key Political Goal and Objectives of the Government of Georgia

The primary political goal of the Government of Georgia lies in ensuring the country's sustainable economic development and social equality, strengthening security and stability and enhancing democracy, justice, and the rule of law. The state's key landmarks are the bolstering of sovereignty, de-occupation, the peaceful restoration of territorial integrity, and unwavering progress toward EU and NATO membership.

As one of Georgia's key foreign policy priorities, EU membership is enshrined in the country's constitution. On November 8, 2023, the European Commission recommended that the European Council grant Georgia the EU membership candidate status. This historic decision opened Georgia's path toward EU membership, and the country has been officially included in the EU enlargement package.

To fulfil the long-term plans and political goals of the Government of Georgia, it is vital to ensure consistently growing numbers of supporters of the country's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Stepping up the effort in this direction and maintaining the current growing trend are the Georgian government's communication policy objectives in the process of European integration.

The work of the Georgian Government's StratCom is planned to promote the implementation of the Government's main political goal and strategic objectives.

2.1.2 The Government's Communication Policy

Consistent, integrated, and coordinated communication is one of the central components of the successful implementation of the Georgian Government's agenda. Government communication seeks to explain the Government's goals, plans, and policy to the public. Clarity and steadfastness are essential in crisis communication when informing citizens, on the one hand, and keeping public trust and support, on the other, is exceptionally important until crisis resolution.

This communications strategy is designed to improve the Georgian Government's strategic communication concerning efforts toward tackling challenges facing the country, including planned and implemented fundamental reforms. In addition, the strategy seeks to enhance

the effectiveness and efficiency of the Government's strategic communication, further build trust in the Government and government communication, and keep, attract, and develop highly qualified human resources in light of rapidly changing information technologies.

2.1.3 Key Values of Government Communication

According to the Communications Strategy, the Government of Georgia should inform the country's citizens proactively and consistently about ongoing or planned programs and reforms. At the same time, along with information sharing, the Government of Georgia ensures maximum engagement and feedback from citizens. Government communication relies on the following values:

Transparency: Openness and public access make up one of the major goals of the daily activities of each structure of the Georgian Government. It is obvious that citizens must have access to information depending on their needs.

Truthfulness: The Georgian Government's communication builds on the approach setting forth that any information to be provided to the public must be checked with every relevant structure to prevent the issue of the truthfulness of information from arising.

Timeliness: Providing society with timely and consistent information on ongoing and planned reforms, programs, and activities is necessary.

Cooperation: Signed by the Prime Minister, the Executive Order on the Approval of the Coordination Document for the Strategic Communications of the Government of Georgia and the coordination group created under this document ensure coordinated and streamlined performance within the executive branch.

Interactivity: Strategic communications, by definition, are interactive. In order to effectively plan/implement programs or reforms to be carried out by the Government of Georgia, it is necessary to ensure cooperation and two-way communication between members of society whose everyday lives will be impacted by the given reform.

Innovativeness: Effective and transparent public governance in the modern world builds on innovations and new technologies. In this direction, it is necessary to continuously retrain public servants, on the one hand, so that their approaches may maximally meet modern standards and, on the other, ensure uninterrupted and equal access to public services.

2.2 The Goals and Objectives of the Communications Strategy

2.2.1. Communication Vision

The vision of the Government's Communication Strategy implies creating an efficient, consistent, coordinated, and proactive communications system built on the values shared by

the Government and society, focusing on internal and external audiences and meeting the country's information needs. In addition, the Strategic Communications Document supports the Government's long-term goals through open, reliable, proactive, unbiased, and effective communication with the country's internal and external audiences.

2.2.2 The Goals and Objectives of the Communications Strategy

Goal 1. Providing Communication in Line with National Interests and Values

The effective use of strategic communications bolsters enhancing the narrative about national interests and values, which in turn ensures the strengthening of national unity and the country's reputation on both local and international levels. Consequently, the Government's communications policy seeks to implement communication in line with national interests and values, securing the country's solid, positive image.

Objective 1.1. Supporting the Government's National Vision and Priorities

The effective use of strategic communications lays the solid foundation for gaining and enhancing public support for the Government's priorities. The Government's Communications Strategy seeks to enhance proactive and inclusive communication so that Georgian citizens, both at home and abroad, may have reliable, unbiased, and timely information on the Government's priorities.

Objective 1.2. Strengthening Public Support for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration

Regularly informing the country's population on the advantages, benefits, and opportunities offered by EU and NATO membership and ensuring easy access to information is particularly important in increasing public support for European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Along with the positive aspects of EU and NATO integration, understanding the accompanying responsibility ensures the consolidation of the country's population around the idea of European and Euro-Atlantic integration and the sustainability of support.¹

Objective 1.3. Raising Awareness about the Ongoing and Implemented Reforms of the Government

In the process of gaining and strengthening public support for the Government's work, particular importance is attached to the level of public awareness. Notably, the Government must ensure that messages and information are provided to wider audiences promptly.

¹ The 2021-2025 Communications Strategy of the Government of Georgia for Georgia's EU and NATO Membership.

Result-oriented communication campaigns make up one of the main tools in maintaining continuous communication with and informing the public in a timely manner. These campaigns are designed to raise citizen awareness about the Government’s priorities, on the one hand, and change their attitudes and behavior, on the other.

Objective 1.4. Effective Management of the Government’s Image on Various Communication Platforms

Strengthening the Government’s image is one of the crucial components of its unified communication policy—it plays an essential role in gaining public trust and ensuring cooperation and engagement with society. Using communication platforms to reach out to the public ensures access to diverse, broad audiences, and this, for its part, allows for shaping and enhancing the Government’s positive public image through comprehensive and consistent narrative and messaging.

Objective 1.5. Strengthening Cooperation with International and Local Media and Stakeholders

The role and support of the media are essential not only for informing the public but also for enhancing the narrative about the country’s national interests, so that the media may ensure the delivery of information about the country’s progress to the relevant audience on the one hand, and promote the shaping and cementing of the country’s positive image, on the other.

Goal 2. Stepping up Efforts Toward the Fight against Disinformation

Disinformation, a significant challenge facing most of the world, undermines the effectiveness of government communication. The disinformation narratives in Georgia are designed to reduce trust in the Government and state institutions, polarize society, undermine confidence in democratic institutions, impact public opinion, weaken Georgia’s international image, and erode public support for European integration.

Stepping up efforts toward combatting disinformation and increasing the population’s resilience in this regard is one of the main goals of the Georgian Government’s unified communication policy. Effectively combatting disinformation calls for a multifaceted approach encompassing strong proactive communication, support for media literacy initiatives, cementing cooperation with media platforms, and deepening cooperation with international partners.

To combat disinformation effectively, an interagency coordination group will be established. This group, operating within the framework of the strategy, will work to implement the goals and objectives related to countering disinformation.

Objective 2.1. Developing the Capacities of the Strategic Communications Units of State Institutions for Combatting Disinformation

Developing the capacities of the strategic communications units of state institutions is one of the primary components in identifying disinformation and ensuring effective response. Equipping employees with adequate skills and tools reduces the malignant influences of disinformation and fosters greater public resilience against disinformation.

Objective 2.2. Promoting the Development of Media Literacy

In a complex information environment, critically assessing, using, and developing information is particularly important in making informed decisions. Developing media literacy skills contributes to the empowerment of public resilience against disinformation. In this direction, it is essential to step up the efforts toward supporting media literacy initiatives on the one hand and to deepen cooperation with the Georgian Communications Commission, the primary institution responsible for developing and promoting media literacy, on the other.

Objective 2.3. Strengthening/Upgrading the Effectiveness of Cooperation with the Media

The Government's cooperation with the media is of particular importance in delivering fact-based information, on the one hand, and for bolstering public support for government initiatives or reforms, on the other. In addition, the media play an enormous role in combatting disinformation and enhancing public resilience.

Goal 3. The Institutional Upgrading of the Strategic Communications System

The presence of streamlined and effective systems of strategic communications in state institutions creates a solid foundation for implementing reforms, shaping an informed society, gaining public support, and effectively responding to crises in the country. Strategic communications enable the Government to navigate in a complex information environment and deliver desired messages to the public in a maximally effective manner.

Objective 3.1. Improving Interagency Coordination

The presence of a streamlined interagency coordination system broadly defines the effectiveness of government communication. Coordinated work between strategic communications units is significant in the process of informing the public about the Government's ongoing programs and reforms. One of the goals of the Government's communication policy is to upgrade interagency communication, which underpins the shaping of unified, consistent messages and narratives, the use of resources with maximum effectiveness, mitigating the risks of equivocal messages spread in society, and enhancing effective communication during crises and, accordingly, ensuring greater public support for government initiatives.

Objective 3.2. Enhancing the Capacities of the Strategic Communications Coordination Group

Perfecting a strategic communications system requires enhancing the capacities of the coordination group. Sharing information on time and coordinating ongoing activities and plans for the future with the Strategic Communications Department of the Government Administration as the central coordinating body sets the stage for effectively carrying out work, on the one hand, and the systemic enhancement of strategic communication capacities, on the other.



Chapter 3. The Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of the Strategy

3.1. Implementing the Strategy

The Strategic Communications Department of the Government Administration, through the strategic communications coordination group, is engaged in the process of planning and implementing the Ministries' campaigns. In line with the Government's Decree #740, the strategic communications coordination group was established. The Head of the Strategic Communications Department of the Administration of the Government chairs the group. The coordination group is designed to provide complete information about government programs to the public and to boost the coordination of strategically important matters based on the fundamental values of communication. The coordination group, which assembles once a week, brings together representatives of the Ministries, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the Office of the National Security Council, and the Offices of the Governments of the Autonomous Republics of Adjara and Abkhazia.

Achieving the effectiveness of communication campaigns calls for common goals shared by the executive link of government. These are:

National goal: Any communication campaign implemented by the Government of Georgia must be, above all else, in line with the country's supreme law, the Constitution, and the national goals declared by the Government.

The Government's goal: Key goals are defined by the Government and the legislative body of Georgia that individual sectoral goals must be tailored to.

Sectoral goal: Communication campaigns and activities planned by the Ministries must correspond to individual sectoral goals and be planned in line with the long-term goals of the relevant structure.

3.2. Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy

The monitoring and evaluation component is a necessary tool for achieving maximum effectiveness in the process of implementing the one-year Action Plan developed in line with the Communications Strategy of the Government of Georgia. The monitoring and evaluation of implemented activities are essential for measuring the effectiveness of work or campaigns carried out and the level of success and for planning the subsequent year's action plan based on these results.

The monitoring of the strategy will be carried out in line with the components of relevance (are the goals and objectives still relevant?), effectiveness (whether or not the strategy's goals and objectives have been achieved), and impact (what has changed as a result of the implemented policy?).

The Strategic Communications Department of the Government Administration will develop the Action Plan Report at the end of the year, with inputs provided by every structure of the executive branch, with its activities included in the Annual Action Plan of the Communications Strategy of the Government of Georgia.



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